AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-43 (cancel).

Claim 44 (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising:

a first ribonucleotide (RNA) sequence wherein said first RNA sequence is about 20-100 nucleotides in length, and wherein said first RNA sequence is at least 80% identical to a sequence complementary to a region of a target gene, and

a second RNA sequence wherein said second RNA sequence is complementary to said first RNA sequence,

wherein said nucleic acid molecule is capable of reducing expression of the target gene in an animal cell when the nucleic acid molecule is introduced into said animal cell.

Claim 45 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is at least 90% identical to a sequence complementary to said sequence complementary to said region of said target gene.

Claim 46 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is at least 95% identical to a sequence complementary to said sequence complementary to said region of said target gene.

Claim 47 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first and second RNA sequences consist essentially of ribonucleotides.

Claim 48 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein at least one of said first and second RNA sequences is comprised at least partially of ribonucleotide analogues.

Claim 49 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 24 nucleotides in length.

Claim 50 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 23 nucleotides in length.

Claim 51 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 22 nucleotides in length.

Claim 52 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 21 nucleotides in length.

Claim 53 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 20 nucleotides in length.

Claim 54 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said first RNA sequence is 19 nucleotides in length.

Claim 55 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein said second RNA sequence is 18 nucleotides in length.

Claim 56 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to any one of claims 49-55, wherein said first RNA sequence is about the same length as said second RNA sequence.

Claim 57 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to any one of claims 49-55, wherein said first RNA sequence is the same length as the second RNA sequence.

Claim 58 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein the first and second RNA sequences are in the same nucleic acid strand.

Claim 59 (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 58, wherein the first and second RNA sequences are separated by a nucleic acid stuffer sequence.

Claim 60 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein the first and second RNA sequences are in separate nucleic acid strands.

Claim 61 (New) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 44, wherein the first RNA sequences is identical to said sequence complementary said region of said target gene and exactly complementary to said second RNA sequence.

Claim 62 (New) A method of delaying, repressing, or otherwise reducing the expression of a target gene in an animal cell, comprising introducing the nucleic acid molecule of claim 44 to the animal cell.

Claim 63 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first and second RNA sequences consist essentially of ribonucleotides.

Claim 64 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein at least one of said first and second RNA sequences is comprised at least partially of ribonucleotide analogues.

Claim 65 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 23 nucleotides in length.

Claim 66 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 22 nucleotides in length.

Claim 67 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 21 nucleotides in length.

Claim 68 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 20 nucleotides in length.

Claim 69 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 19 nucleotides in length.

Claim 70 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first RNA sequence is 18 nucleotides in length.

Claim 71 (New) The method according to any one of claims 65-70, wherein said first RNA sequence is about the same length as the second RNA sequence.

Claim 72 (New) The method according to any one of claims 65-70, wherein said first RNA sequence is the same length as the second RNA sequence.

Claim 73 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said first and second RNA sequences are in the same nucleic acid strand.

Claim 74 (New) The method according to claim 73, wherein said first and second RNA sequences are separated by a nucleic acid stuffer sequence.

Claim 75 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein the first and second RNA sequences are in separate nucleic acid strands.

Claim 76 (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein the first RNA sequences is identical to said sequence complementary said region of said target gene and exactly complementary to said second RNA sequence.